

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 192111Z NOV 76

FM AMCONSUL TORONTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4527

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS TORONTO 2075

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EFIN, SOPN, CA

SUBJECT: EX-FINANCE MINISTER TURNER HITS TRUDEAU ON QUEBEC AND ECONOMY

1. IN AN "OFF"THE-THE-RECORD" SPEECH NOVEMBER 18 TO TORONTO'S PRIMROSE

CLUB, FORMER FEDERALFINANCE MINISTER JOHN TURNER "CAME OUT OF HIS SELF-IMPOSED POLITICAL SILENCE TO CRITICIZE TRUDEAU OVER THE QUEBEC QUESTION AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OVER ITS ECONOMIC POLICIES." THE TORONTO STAR'S FRONT PAGE COVERAGE NOVEMBER 19 TERMED THE SPEECH "TOUGH" AND THE AUDIENCE "HIGHLY RESPONSIVE."

2. ACCORDING TO THE STAR COVERAGE, TURNER

A) CALLED FOR AN IMMEDIATE END TO WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS, THE ONLY VALUE OF WHICH HE SAID WAS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT, BUT WHICH HAD CAUSED "DISLOCATION" ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND PARTICULARLY IN QUEBEC. HE ADDED THAT THE ECONOMY WAS THE CHIEF REASON FOR THE "GROUNDSWELL OF DISSATISFACTION" THAT HAS ENABLED THE ARTI QUEBECOIS TO COME TO POWER.

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B) TOOK A "BACKHANDED SILJ" AT PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S REMARKS BY SAYING, "IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SAY WE WILL NO NEGOTIATE CONFEDERATION, AND THAT CANADA IS INDIVISIBLE. WE MUST SHOW QUEBECKERS THAT THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN CONFEDERATION IS ESSENTIAL. WE MUST NOT ONLY GIVE A RATIONAL EXPLANATION OF THE ADVANTAGES OF FEDERALISM; WE MUST ALSO MAKE AN EMOTIONAL APPEAL TO QUEBECKERS AS PARTNERS IN A UNION." TURNER CONTINUED THAT HE WAS "PREPARED TO RECONSIDER THE TERMS OF THE BNA ACT ... PERHAPS THIS IS THE TIME TO DO IT. THIS IS NOT NEGOTIATING CONFEDERATION -- THIS IS FACING UP TO THE REALITY OF TODAY." TURNER SAID THAT ANY TIME LAPSE BEFORE A QUEBEC REFERENDUM ON SEPARATION WOULD INVITE "EXTREMISM" IN ALL PARTS OF CANADA.

C) SAID PQ LEADER RENE LEVESQUE WILL BE SUBJECT TO INFLUENCE FROM THE MORE RADICAL, SEPARATIST-MINDED MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY.

D) REFERRED TO HIS RECENT TRIP TO EUROPE WHERE HE SAID HE FOUND THAT CANADA IS NOT NOT ONLY AT "THE BOTTOM OF THE LINE" FOR CREDIT BUT IS CONSIDERED A POLITICAL RISK.

3. THE STAR REPORTED OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF TURNER'S SPEECH AS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

A) DECENTRALIZATION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS.

B) GREATER ASSURANCE OF LANGUAGE RIGHTS "BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE QUEBEC."

C) IMPROVED ECONOMIC DEALS FOR THE MARITIMES AND BETTER CONSULTATION WITH WESTERN PROVINCES ON RESOURCES.

D) BETTER SHARING OF ONTARIO'S MANUFACTURING AND ECONOMIC POWER WITH THE REST OF CANADA.

E) EASING OF THE STRICT TERMS OF THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW BOARD'S GUIDELINES.

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